

Israel bans doctor from travel

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel has prohibited travel abroad for a prominent Israeli Arab doctor who acted as an intermediary with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). Ahmad Tibi, a gynaecologist, said Friday he had planned to go to Egypt with his family this week but received a three-month travel ban from the interior ministry which said his trip could harm state security. Tibi said he was to have met senior Egyptian officials including Osama Al Baz, political adviser to President Hosni Mubarak. "Whoever protests at prohibitions on Jews leaving other countries can't believe the way against me and my people especially when I am an Israeli citizen. If I did something illegal, put me on trial," Tibi told Reuters. "I believe that they thought I was possibly going to meet the PLO but it was private visit," said Tibi, who was given a two-month travel ban last July. Tibi was named as middleman in alleged illegal contacts last year between former Science Minister Ezer Weizman and the PLO on Israel's proposal to hold elections in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Tibi, 33, has also mediated in Israeli-Arab contacts for prisoner exchanges.

Volume 15 Number 4584

Bush orders Egypt's \$7b debt cancelled

WASHINGTON (AP) — President George Bush Friday ordered forgiveness of Egypt's \$7-billion in military debts as a reward for the country for its cooperation with the U.S. efforts against Iraq. The president cited U.S. national security interests and said the action was necessary for "the success of Desert Shield," the code name for the U.S. military operation in the Gulf. Bush's action, along with directing the Treasury Department to reduce the debt to zero, put into effect Ben Hur Tak, the debt forgiveness which Congress approved as part of this year's foreign aid package.

More than 250 Soviets leave Iraq

BAGHDAD (AP) — More than 250 Soviets left Iraq Friday and Soviet Deputy Premier Igor Belousov met with Iraqi leaders seeking an agreement to terminate Soviet companies' contracts with Iraq, officials reported. The Soviets left aboard an Aeroflot Ilyushin Il-86 airliner shortly after midnight (2100 GMT Thursday). About 1,000 others will be sent by Soviet and Iraqi air carriers by Jan. 10, five days before the deadline set by the United Nations for Iraq to withdraw all its troops from Kuwait or face military action.

"We are taking action by U.S.-led multinational forces. Soviet diplomats," Belousov said. Belousov met with Iraqi officials to discuss ways of developing relations between Iraq and the Soviet Union with Hammadi, who is also in charge of economic relations with foreign countries.

Soviet deputies concerned over Gulf

NEW YORK (AP) — The Soviet Foreign Ministry said its parliament has urged a peaceful solution to the Gulf crisis but stressed the country's support for the U.N. resolution on the use of force to drive Iraq out of Kuwait. On the last day of its 10-session that was consumed by the federal election, the People's Deputies approved a resolution that affirmed "support for relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions which were adopted after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait," according to the state news agency TASS. Legislators also called on Iraq "to display high standards of responsibility for the destiny of their homeland and international peace and to fulfill demands of the international community based on the rules of civilised life and law."

TASS said the resolution expressed support for the policies and decisions taken by the Kremlin leadership.

Americans can dial for Gulf protest details

NEW YORK (R) — For \$10 a minute, Americans can get the latest news on protests against U.S. military involvement in the Gulf. The number 1-900-44-no-war provides a hotline for the Coalition to Stop U.S. Military Intervention in the Middle East. The coalition says the phone number, which has been operating about 10 days, has raised thousands of dollars.

Alaska pipeline security beefed up

ANCHORAGE (R) — Security around the United States' trans-Alaska pipeline has been increased because of possible attacks by backers of Iraq, officials said. The threat of war in the Gulf has led officials to evaluate security for the 1,300-kilometre pipeline that delivers a rented tank barge of oil a day, a spokesman for the Alaska Pipeline System said. Federal officials said at least one of the 12 U.S. military bases along the pipeline since Aug. 2 has been invaded by Kuwait. They also said they have written extensively on Iran.

"The U.S. forces should end

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جordan Times يومية سياسية تصدر بالإنجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحافية الأردنية الرأي

Israel approves Palestinian bank

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (R) — Israeli military authorities have granted permission for the establishment of the first Palestinian-owned commercial bank in the occupied territories, the bank's investor said Friday. The move follows statements by officials that Israel was considering steps to aid "economic development" in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip and make the 1.75 million Arabs there less dependent on jobs in the Jewish state. Kamal Hassounah, a businessman in Hebron, said he received army approval for the bank this week, six years after applying, and would meet Israeli central bank officials soon to discuss conditions of operations. "I think there is some change in Israeli policy. Before they refused to give any big projects approval for the West Bank. They understood we now need this bank because we cannot develop our economy without one," Hassounah told Reuters. "This is the first Palestinian-owned bank in the occupied territories since 1967," he said. Israel allowed the Amman-based Cairo-Amman Bank to open branches in the West Bank in 1986.

Price: Jordan 100 fils; Saudi Arabia 1.50 riyals; UAE 1.50 dirhams

Israeli terror group attacks Palestinians, vows more assaults

Combined agency dispatches

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM —

A Jewish vigilante group that claimed responsibility for shooting three Palestinians in a roadside ambush warned it would launch more attacks on Arabs, an Israeli journal said Friday.

Reporter Roni Shaked of the Yedioth Ahronoth daily said an anonymous caller told him an hour after the shooting Thursday night that "this is the first activity of the group, and there are going to be more actions, and much worse than this."

Relatives of the victims and Israeli liberals blamed Israel's right-wing government for the attack, saying its lax attitude towards Jewish militants encouraged violence against Arabs.

The shooting attack came a day after three Jewish settlers were freed after serving less than seven years of a life term for killing three Palestinians in a shooting spree and maiming two West Bank mayors with car bombs. They were greeted as heroes by fellow settlers.

Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens condemned Thursday's shooting as a "criminal act" and said the assailants would be "most severely

punished." Avi Pazner, a spokesman for Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, called the attack "shocking."

One of the victims, 30-year-old Faisal Amer, was in serious but stable condition after being shot several times in the chest, leg and abdomen, said a spokesman for Jerusalem's Hadassah hospital.

Amer's 31-year-old sister, Ibtissam, was in stable condition after being shot in the hand. Her nine-month-old daughter, who was hit by shrapnel in the hips, was also stable, Mekel said.

Relatives of the victims blamed official (Israeli) leniency toward Jewish extremists for the shooting attack.

"This is encouragement of terrorism and I expect more killings from both sides if the government doesn't stop this," said Hassan Hussein Amer, 50, a cousin of Faisal and Ibtissam.

Left-wing legislator Yossi Sarid cited the early release from prison of three militant settlers, members of a group called the "Jewish Underground."

"There is no doubt that the release of the murderers was an encouragement for additional murderers. Since the Jewish

(Continued on page 5)



PROTEST IN AMMAN: Women waving flags and banners demonstrate in front of the U.N. office in Amman Friday



against the interception by the multinational forces in the Gulf of an Iraq-bound peace ship (See story on page 3)

Women's meeting protests Israeli occupation

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AP) —

About 300 European, American and Israeli women held a silent protest Friday against Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip to open an international women's peace conference.

"No compromise on anything," U.S. President George Bush told reporters as a 17-ship American task force headed for the Gulf to bolster the multinational war machine ranged against Iraq.

"Our policy is fixed," said Iraqi Information Minister Latif Al Jassem. He insisted there would be no surprise initiatives either before or after the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline for Baghdad to pull out of Kuwait or face war.

"Bush wants to open a dialogue before Jan. 3. He has rejected Iraq's insistence Jan. 12 for meeting U.S. Secretary of State James Baker as too close to the deadline for possible war.

NATO's top general said meanwhile the multi-national "Desert Shield" force in the Gulf will be ready to push Iraq out of Kuwait after Jan. 15 if required.

"I think the forces will be ready if necessary by Jan. 15," U.S. General John Galvin, NATO's supreme allied commander Europe, told journalists Friday as he watched U.S. Army trucks being loaded at Rotterdam aboard ships bound for the Gulf.

"From our side there is no movement... no flexibility," he told the British Broadcasting Corporation in an interview from Baghdad. There would be "no change between now and a couple of years or three years or 10 years," over Kuwait, he said.

Bush, denying press reports of progress towards breaking the Washington-Baghdad deadlock over a date for a dialogue, said

"(Continued on page 4)

Iraq and U.S. say no change, no compromise

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQ AND U.S. —

United States refused to budge in the Gulf crisis, ruling out any compromise and saying there was no progress towards last gasp peace talks to avert a new year war over Kuwait.

Iraqi officials were quoted Friday as saying Bush favours a quick war to save American lives.

U.S. Defense officials were reported Friday to be planning inoculations for troops against biological warfare.

Sailors and marines began leaving U.S. ports for the Gulf on Friday aboard 17 ships, including the aircraft carriers America and Theodore Roosevelt from the Norfolk naval base in Virginia.

Navy officials said it should be a two-week voyage, meaning the ships would arrive before the Jan. 15 deadline. Aircraft carriers on station in the Middle East region are the USS Saratoga in the Eastern Mediterranean, the USS Midway in the Arabian Sea and the USS Kennedy in the Red Sea.

The deployment of such a large number of U.S. warships to one part of the world is unprecedented since the Vietnam war.

The Defense Department said U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia and (Continued on page 4)

Iraqis test-fire new missile, spark alert

Combined agency dispatches

IRAQ FRIDAY —

Test-fired a surface-to-surface missile for the second time this week, shooting it away from multinational forces in Saudi Arabia, the U.S. central command said.

The firing appeared to be part of an additional testing or training mission," said Casey Mahon, a central command spokesman.

Mahan said the missile landed in Iraq. He could not comment on the alert status of the 300,000 U.S. troops in Operation Desert Shield during the firing. Additional details about the flight path or the kind of missile were not released.

Reporters visiting the hospital ship USNS Mercy said crew members went on a heightened state of alert around noon because of the missile launch, carrying their protective gear against chemical weapons with them.

The Gulf crisis has visitors to Israel in half, and revenge attacks by both Arabs and Jews have followed the October massacre of over 20 Palestinians by police in Jerusalem.

Angela Liberatore, from Bologna, Italy, said the worsening situation in Jerusalem was clear.

"You come for peace and you are trying. But you know it is becoming more tense and difficult to do anything, even just to walk in the street," she said.

Last year over 3,000 European, Israeli and Palestinian women marched through Jerusalem as part of the peace conference, but the march was broken up by police after a Palestinian flag was raised.

medium-range missiles reportedly took U.S. military officials by surprise.

The first launch of the series was completed before American satellites and sensors noticed it, the Times reported, and Israeli and U.S. officials readied their air forces for attack.

Israeli sources said the Dec. 2 tests were carried out on an updated version of the Al Hussein missile, an Iraqi variant of the Scud-B with an extended range of 600 kilometres. Three missiles were launched, the sources said.

Officials have expressed concern that the pressure of the Jan. 15 U.N. deadline allowing the use of force against Iraq might prompt Baghdad to launch a pre-emptive strike. Iraq has threatened to hit Israel first to split the Arab and Western coalition ranged against it.

The Iraqis are believed to have up to 1,000 surface-to-surface missiles of various types, either Soviet-built SS-1 Scud-Bs or Iraqi variants of that weapon.

Baghdad bought about 2,000 Scud-Bs from Moscow during the 1980-88 Gulf war and launched scores during that conflict.

It is not known whether Iraq's missiles are capable of carrying chemical warheads, although there have been reports that they have deployed some chemical warheads with their Scud-Bs.

Spokeswoman for Vt. the company that produces Vzglyad, said a statement would be read before the programme's usual broadcast time to explain why it had been cancelled.

"In essence, the announcement will say the programme was cancelled by the leadership of the state committee for radio and television because of... a difference in opinion over events of the past year," she told Reuters by telephone.

"...A difference between the leadership and the authors of the programme."

TV censors call off Shevardnadze programme

MOSCOW (R) — Broadcasting officials Friday cancelled a television programme about the resignation of Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

Alexander Lyubimov, presenter of the popular weekly Vzglyad (View), said the cancellation of Friday's edition was especially troubling at a time when the country was taking a conservative turn.

Shevardnadze, an architect of reform under President Mikhail Gorbachev, resigned last week saying the Soviet Union was heading towards dictatorship. He denounced his critics as "reactionary."

A spokeswoman for Vt. the company that produces Vzglyad, said a statement would be read before the programme's usual broadcast time to explain why it had been cancelled.

"In essence, the announcement will say the programme was cancelled by the leadership of the state committee for radio and television because of... a difference in opinion over events of the past year," she told Reuters by telephone.

"...A difference between the leadership and the authors of the programme."

The Arab World for Maintenance and General Services

Tel: 812702

Look page 7

Iran demands U.S. pullout from Gulf, urges regional solution

their aggression and leave the region to its own so that we can solve the region's problems with peace and cooperation," the radio quoted Rafsanjani as saying.

"We pray that both sides come to their senses and there be no bloodshed and mischief in the region," he added.

Rafsanjani said the pace has accelerated in recent weeks because of increasing uncertainty in the region as some Israeli officials have said. Instead, he said, Israel will have to make use of "every available space" in the history of immigration in Israel.

He noted that the influx was creating major housing problems and said the government should take over construction to resolve the crisis.

The government expects more than 200,000 immigrants this year, about 90 per cent of the Soviets. The total will be second only to 1949, when more than 239,000 mobile homes have been moved into place.

He predicted "a difficult situation for the next 10 to 12 months" and said the government should take over construction.

Rafsanjani said he did not believe the newcomers would have to be housed in tents, as some Israeli officials have said. Instead, he said, Israel will have to make use of "every available space" in the history of immigration in Israel.

Iran reiterates that the aggression on Kuwait be ended, Iraqi forces return to Iraq and arrogant forces, especially the U.S., who have come to the region on this pretext with dangerous weapons, also end their aggression."

Western analysts believe the Iranians fear that a long-term presence of U.S. forces in the region would throttle those ambitions.

The Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said graduates instructed in use of the weapons system test fired an SA-6 at a military base Thursday.

The U.S. forces should end

feel that a regional security arrangement under U.S. auspices would probably mean that Saudi Arabia, and not Iran, would be the favoured country"

to lead such a force.

Still locked under a Western arms embargo, Iran is nevertheless engaged in an ambitious effort to rebuild its delapidated military.

Tehran Television Thursday showed off Tehran's latest arms procurement: Advanced Soviet-built SA-6 anti-aircraft missiles for the air wing of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps.

The acquisition of the mobile, radar-guided SA-6s is a big boost for Iran's badly depleted military, which suffers from a chronic shortage of advanced weapons.

The Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) said graduates instructed in use of the weapons system test fired an SA-6 at a military base Thursday.

The Los Angeles Times reported last week that the Dec. 2 Iraqi test-firing of three

"Suicide commandos"

Thousands of Iraqis have been

trained as commandos for suicidal attacks against the U.S.-led

conflict.

(Continued on page 5)

Starting a new life

By Stephen Nisbet
Reuter

BRUSSELS — Paul, a Romanian interpreter, boasted casually of how he had lied to Belgian Justice Ministry officials when claiming to be a refugee.

"I feel like starting a new life, so I came to Belgium and told them I had been beaten up by the miners," said Paul, in his 30s, referring to the street violence in Bucharest last June which squads of miners attacked suspected government critics.

"But I'm not staying in Brussels. It's the most boring city in Europe. I'm off to Liege to get work," he said. The east Belgian city had the advantage of being near the Dutch and German frontiers he said he needed to disappear quickly.

People like Paul (not his real name) are giving European Community immigration authorities a headache as they contemplate a big influx of people from the former communist countries of Eastern Europe, coinciding with progress to the EC's frontier-free single market at the end of 1992.

The exodus could become a crisis if, as expected, the Soviet parliament passes a law in the next few weeks allowing its citizens to emigrate.

Soviet EC ambassador Vladimir Shemiatenkov said Moscow's labour experts expected two to three million Soviet citizens, from street sweepers to professional people, to head west in search of work.

The existing problem can be seen at Petit Chateau, a former army selection centre in a dingy, cramped neighbourhood of central Brussels, where Paul and 12,000 other current applicants for refugee status have their first brushes with authority.

Each day before dawn, dozens of people from around the world queue up to put their cases, hoping to persuade interviewers that they face persecution at home — or at least to string out official inquiries so they can prolong their stay.

One man in the queue, a Sikh

from India, showed a discoloured foot which he said was the result of a police beating at home.

He said he had come to Europe on a cheap visa to Czechoslovakia, then paid \$500 to a taxi driver who brought him illegally to Belgium.

Belgian refugee commissioner Marc Bossuyt said only 17 per cent of applications succeeded and even then mostly because the applicant's story was given the benefit of the doubt.

Justice Minister Melchior Wathelet said the number of political asylum seekers was exploding throughout Europe and North America — from 25,000 in 1973 to an estimated 600,000 this year.

This trend, with 90 per cent of applications rejected, was putting at risk the very basis of the 1951 Geneva Convention for protecting genuine refugees, and also called into question general immigration policies. Wathelet said this month.

Romanians are the biggest single nationality among the 500 people crammed into Petit Chateau's dormitory living quarters. A thousand more would-be refugees are put up elsewhere in makeshift red cross accommodation.

Earlier this year, Poles were the most numerous group, and may become so again shortly when Germany allows them three-month visa-free entry.

Bonn's decision has annoyed others in the Schengen group, the community's six founding members, which have pledged to demolish their internal frontiers faster than the rest of the bloc. Diplomats said Germany had effectively imposed the same policy on its Schengen partners — France, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands — without consulting them first.

Once in Germany, a Pole could move easily elsewhere in the Schengen bloc.

A Polish diplomat in Brussels said the many Poles expected to take advantage of visa-free travel to Germany would include some intending to work in the West — although the conditions

of entry are supposed to exclude this.

In the EC's capital city, there is already a thriving black labour market provided by Polish and other illegal immigrants, for example in menial domestic and building jobs.

The Brussels newspaper Le Soir reported earlier this month a police raid on a slum flat occupied by 40 Polish squatters who were in Belgium illegally.

The newspaper, not noted for sensationalism, said Pimps found a supply of prostitutes at Petit Chateau among the Ghanaians who make up another large group which traditionally seeks — usually unsuccessfully — to obtain refugee status in Belgium.

Unsuccessful applicants for refugee status are seldom forced to return to where they came from, but go to another EC state or drift into an unofficial existence where they are ripe for exploitation by unscrupulous employers and landlords.

With warnings from Moscow of massive Soviet emigration to the West in the near future, Europe's immigration planners face a dilemma.

If they crack down too hard on Paul and others like him, they may punish some people who genuinely are refugees and not simply economic migrants seeking a better material life.

They may also be tarred with the anti-immigration brush associated with far-right parties in some Western Europe states.

But if they are too lax, they risk seeing an ever-greater arrival rate which could end up fanning popular support for xenophobic parties.

A Liberian waiting outside Petit Chateau in the hope of being offered illegal casual labour said he was grateful to Belgium for offering him sanctuary, but his feelings varied by the day.

"Sometimes people look at you on a tram as though you're inconveniencing them just by being there. But then yesterday, a man gave away his coat to my friend because he was cold," he said.

mando tactics.

Abdul Rahim Abdul Qader told the Al Jouhouriya newspaper that 138,700 volunteers have been trained in special operations in the camp, some 150 kilometres south of Baghdad.

"The Najaf camp is ideal in training combatants who symbolise heroism and discipline," he told the daily.

The analysts said the volunteers are probably receiving training in commando missions to be launched behind the lines of the multinational forces.

The Baath Party said Friday that millions of poor and oppressed Arab and Muslims would rise up alongside Baghdad in any war against foreign troops.

The Baath Party daily Al Thawra said in an editorial that U.S. President George Bush was boasting like a "peacock" about the armies he had massed against Iraq.

The analysts said the training includes suicidal missions by sea and airborne operations.

A senior Baath party official said Thursday that thousands of volunteers had finished courses at a military camp in Najaf where they received special training on weapons and com-

mando tactics.

Abdul Rahim Abdul Qader appealed to Israel's supreme court Thursday to overturn an army order to expel them from the occupied Gaza Strip.

The expulsion order appealed Thursday was condemned by the U.N. Security Council last week in a resolution that also urged more protection for the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.

A Palestinian shot by Israeli troops in 1988 died of his wounds Thursday, hospital officials said.

Khalid Khader Mahmud, 30, had been paralysed since he was wounded by a bullet in his spine. He received treatment in Jordan but returned to the occupied West Bank Wednesday.

Israeli troops shot and wounded nine Palestinians during clashes in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip Thursday, Israel television said.

The army rounded up more activists of the Muslim fundamentalist movement Hamas in a crackdown which began two weeks ago when Hamas claimed responsibility for stabbing to

death three Israelis in Tel Aviv.

Four Hamas fundamentalists appealed to Israel's supreme court Thursday to overturn an army order to expel them from the occupied Gaza Strip.

The expulsion order appealed Thursday was condemned by the U.N. Security Council last week in a resolution that also urged more protection for the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.

Terror

(Continued from page 1)

murders were welcomed, as heroes, the inevitable result is that more people want to be considered as heroes," he said.

In the occupied territories, Palestinians observed a general strike called by underground leaders to protest the mass immigration of Soviet Jews and the increasing settlement of Jews in Arab Jerusalem.

A Palestinian shot by Israeli troops in 1988 died of his wounds Thursday, hospital officials said.

Khalid Khader Mahmud, 30, had been paralysed since he was wounded by a bullet in his spine. He received treatment in Jordan but returned to the occupied West Bank Wednesday.

Israeli troops shot and wounded nine Palestinians during clashes in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip Thursday, Israel television said.

The army rounded up more activists of the Muslim fundamentalist movement Hamas in a crackdown which began two weeks ago when Hamas claimed responsibility for stabbing to

death three Israelis in Tel Aviv.

Four Hamas fundamentalists appealed to Israel's supreme court Thursday to overturn an army order to expel them from the occupied Gaza Strip.

The expulsion order appealed Thursday was condemned by the U.N. Security Council last week in a resolution that also urged more protection for the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.

Missile

(Continued from page 1)

multinational forces if war breaks out, military analysts say.

Military analysts in Baghdad said Iraq was been training regular army commandos and volunteers from the popular army in special operations against allied forces in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf.

The analysts said the training includes suicidal missions by sea and airborne operations.

A senior Baath party official said Thursday that thousands of volunteers had finished courses at a military camp in Najaf where they received special training on weapons and com-

mando tactics.

Abdul Rahim Abdul Qader appealed to Israel's supreme court Thursday to overturn an army order to expel them from the occupied Gaza Strip.

The expulsion order appealed Thursday was condemned by the U.N. Security Council last week in a resolution that also urged more protection for the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.

A senior Baath party official said Thursday that thousands of volunteers had finished courses at a military camp in Najaf where they received special training on weapons and com-

mando tactics.

Abdul Rahim Abdul Qader appealed to Israel's supreme court Thursday to overturn an army order to expel them from the occupied Gaza Strip.

The expulsion order appealed Thursday was condemned by the U.N. Security Council last week in a resolution that also urged more protection for the Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza.

Egypt's first woman is a 'hands-on social worker'

By Mimi Mann
The Associated Press

CAIRO — It took Suzanne Mubarak a year after her husband became president to decide what kind of first lady she wanted to be. Then she accepted the challenge of an American protestant who wanted to be a "hands-on social worker."

The newspaper, not noted for sensationalism, said Pimp found a supply of prostitutes at Petit Chateau among the Ghanaians who make up another large group which traditionally seeks — usually unsuccessfully — to obtain refugee status in Belgium.

For eight years, she has worked among her country's poor to bring education and hope to impoverished children. Mrs. Mubarak describes herself as a "hands-on social worker."

She has done the job largely without fanfare, opening schools and small libraries, obtaining medical supplies and hospitals for those without them. Much of her attention is focused on eradicating illiteracy, which afflicts more than half the 55 million Egyptians.

"I go to the most depressed area, the most depressed school, the most depressed hospital," she said, "but I don't get depressed. When I see what's been done, the smiles of the children, if you can solve the worst case, surely the rest will follow."

If they crack down too hard on Paul and others like him, they may punish some people who genuinely are refugees and not simply economic migrants seeking a better material life.

They may also be tarred with the anti-immigration brush associated with far-right parties in some Western Europe states.

But if they are too lax, they risk seeing an ever-greater arrival rate which could end up fanning popular support for xenophobic parties.

A Liberian waiting outside Petit Chateau in the hope of being offered illegal casual labour said he was grateful to Belgium for offering him sanctuary, but his feelings varied by the day.

"People say I'm shy, but I don't think so," she said. "I would say I'm just a bit timid."

To the outside world, and most

"I go to the most depressed area, the most depressed school, the most depressed hospital, but I don't get depressed."

By George Jahn
The Associated Press

TRAISKIRCHEN, Austria — The Magolas and Pascu families are celebrating Christmas this year in a dingy refugee camp, far from friends and family. They wouldn't want it any other way.

"I'd rather die than go back," Mariana Adriana Pascu said, when asked if she would miss traditional festivities in her former home of Sibiu, Romania. Her twin sister and 7-year-old son nodded their assent.

On another floor of the drab concrete structure housing many of the 1,000 refugees of the Traiskirchen camp, other voices express similar sentiments. The camp, about 50 kilometres south of Vienna, is first home to many Eastern Europeans fleeing poverty and turmoil in their homelands.

Miss Magola appeared comfortable with the sordid surroundings as she and her 19-year-old mother, Sofia, sat on their camp cot, occasionally cuddling the stray cat they had adopted.

Past fears and present anxieties faded as the 21-year-old fashion designer spoke bittersweetly of the future.

Forgettings past

"I want to forget my past," Natalia Magola said of Christmases in Lvov, the Western Ukrainian city of Crumbling Majesty she and her mother left behind. "I want to think only of the future."

"I'd like to go to the United States or maybe Canada," Miss Magola said. "I'm a good dancer. Maybe I can make videos

and become a movie star."

Her mother's aspirations were even simpler.

"I will be happy when my daughter is happy," she said with a smile.

The slow thaw in the Soviet Union did not satisfy the Magolas, fervent Greek Catholics whose religion is struggling to re-establish itself in the Western Ukraine after decades of brutal suppression.

The Traiskirchen camp was first used for refugees fleeing the violent suppression of Hungary's revolt against communism in 1956. Thousands fleeing the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe have passed through it since. The Austrian government picks up its costs.

Miss Magola appeared comfortable with the sordid surroundings as she and her 19-year-old mother, Sofia, sat on their camp cot, occasionally cuddling the stray cat they had adopted.

Past fears and present anxieties faded as the 21-year-old fashion designer spoke bittersweetly of the future.

A movie star

"We sat down at the table, and all of the family made the sign of the cross," she related, her eyes aglow. "Then we had our traditional meal of vegetables and buckwheat, and we prayed and sang religious songs.

"We thought the future looked bright after Ceausescu," Mrs. Pascu said. "We thought we would have lots to eat. Now the situation is catastrophic at home."

The 33-year-old divorcee and her sister, a gym teacher, came to Austria in February, fleeing

what they said was post-revolutionary chaos and the growing conviction that nothing had changed at home.

Mrs. Pascu's sister said she believes that Ceausescu's feared Securitate secret police are still in power. Bills home indicate that the shortage of basic consumer items has not subsided, she said.

The Pascu family has been turned down once by Austria for immigrant status and is appealing. A bitter controversy broke out in Austria last month over plans to send 7,000 Romanians back home, and officials now are trying to find places for them.

Destitution under Ceausescu cloud the memory of past Christmases for the Pascus and make this year's holiday season bright in comparison.

"I got presents in school today," Achim said proudly, brandishing a foil-covered chocolate Santa Claus and a bag full of sweets.

"Such things never happened in Romania," his mother said. "We often had a hard time finding enough to eat at Christmas, and whoever heard of children getting gifts at school?"

"We don't know what the future holds, but it's bound to be better than the past."

STUDIO HAIG

Professional Quality in 1 Hour Service Develop your colour film at our shop and get:-

* **JUMBO photo size 30% larger**

* **Free enlargement 20 x 30 cm**

Shmeisani - Opp. Grindlays

Bank. Phone: 604042

Sweifach tel: 823891

AMMAN-JORDAN

TEL: 621 775 FAX: 656 270

Tlx: 23 023 Pob: 815 405

AMMAN-JORDAN

RENT

Sports

Man. United delighted with Robson's comeback

LONDON (R) — Bryan Robson's form since his comeback for Manchester United has astounded manager Alex Ferguson.

The 33-year-old former England World Cup captain played only his second match of an injury-plagued season Wednesday, when United beat Norwich 3-0, and produced a fine performance before being replaced 10 minutes from time.

Ferguson, whose sixth-placed side face Aston Villa in the English first division Saturday, said: "Bryan has been brilliant since his comeback."

"I never imagined he would be as good as he has been since he returned. We took him off only because he was feeling a bit tired."

Ferguson said the experienced midfielder, who has had two Achilles tendon operations since being forced to drop out of the World Cup finals in Italy, still had a vital role to play with United.

"Bryan has exceptional qualities and I'm looking to him as a natural leader to take us through the minefields we will encounter if we are to win the championship which is my intention," he said.

The United captain's contract expires at the end of this season but Ferguson said: "A lot of people might fancy him but I

want him at Old Trafford and I have no intention of dumping him."

Ferguson was awaiting a fitness test on winger Danny Wallace, who missed the Norwich game with a knee injury, before naming his side.

Experienced midfielder Jimmy Case and former England international defender Russell Osman are set to return for Southampton against Tottenham.

Case missed Wednesday's win over Manchester City with a back injury and Osman has been out for two games with a bad knee.

Norwich could be without three front men for their visit to Coventry, where they have won only once in the first division.

Dundee United hope to beat Scottish League leaders Glasgow Rangers Saturday to bring them within two points of the title holders.

Captain Maurice Malpas said: "It would be nice to win this game just to let them know we are still in there fighting. Traditionally, the team which does best around Christmas and New Year goes on to win the league."

Rangers' oldest rivals, Celtic, will be trying desperately to regain some credibility by beating Hearts.

Celtic are languishing in fifth place with 16 points, 11 fewer than Rangers and only three above bottom club St. Mirren.

Drivers gear up for Paris-Dakar Race

PARIS (AP) — More than 400 cars, trucks and motorcycles will start Saturday in the 13th Paris-to-Dakar Rally, but only about one-third are expected to finish on Jan. 17 in one of the world's toughest endurance races.

Ari Vatanen on Finland will be defending his title as the rally sets out from the Chateau de Vincennes outside Paris to Clermont-Ferrand in central France, the first of 13 stages.

A short four-kilometre prologue Sunday will determine the starting order when the rally begins in earnest on Jan. 2, with a leg starting in Tripoli, Libya,

over Wimbledon and England midfielder Steve Hodge is doubtful after suffering a recurrence of a calf injury.

City manager Peter Reid has three strikers with problems. Adrian Heath has a virus and is expected to recover in time but Wayne Clarke and Clive Allen are unlikely to be fit.

Derby hope that former England goalkeeper Peter Shilton will recover from knee and groin injuries to take over from deputy Martin Taylor against Everton.

Leeds will be without defender Peter Haddock against Wimbledon. Haddock was carried off at Sunderland last Sunday with ankle, calf and knee injuries although X-ray examinations showed no broken bones.

Dundee United hope to beat Scottish League leaders Glasgow Rangers Saturday to bring them within two points of the title holders.

Captain Maurice Malpas said: "It would be nice to win this game just to let them know we are still in there fighting. Traditionally, the team which does best around Christmas and New Year goes on to win the league."

Rangers' oldest rivals, Celtic, will be trying desperately to regain some credibility by beating Hearts.

Celtic are languishing in fifth place with 16 points, 11 fewer than Rangers and only three above bottom club St. Mirren.

All-German swimming team to get tough world championship baptism

LONDON (R) — German swimmers take their first world championship plunge as a united team in the new year but will not pack the all-round power of the days when the country was divided.

East Germany swamped the rest in women's swimming for the best part of two decades. The system, which derived the glory, devoted everything to nurturing the talent but fell apart with the collapse of the former Communist state.

Gross first made his towering presence felt at the 1982 World Championships in Guayaquil, Ecuador, when he won the 200 freestyle and 200 butterfly golds — a feat he repeated for West Germany in Madrid four years later.

This time, at 26, he swims just butterfly. He showed superb form in winning last month's German national titles at 100 and 200 metres when barely over 20s.

The great eastern German men's hope is Nils Rudolph, who made his big breakthrough in 1990, setting world-best times for short-course 50 metres freestyle and long-course 50 metres butterfly — each at the expense of U.S. kingpin Matt Biondi.

Olympic 200 metres individual medley champion Daniels Humer, European 200 freestyle Gold medalist Manuela Steinbach and Grit Mueller, a European bronze medalist, should keep for the one major title missing from his collection after the 1986 world 100 metres breaststroke gold was snatched from his grasp by disqualification for faulty kick at the turn.

The first three days of the championships feature diving, synchronised swimming and water polo but the pace quickens with the innovation of a "sprint day" to open the swimming programme in the Perth Superdrome.

It comprises 50-metre sprints in butterfly, backstroke and breaststroke and 4X50 freestyle relays for both men and women, but is not an official part of the World Championships.

However, all three would have been hard-pressed to upstage Janet Evans, the diminutive American who splashed to three Olympic tides — 400 and 800 metres freestyle and 400

individual medley — in Seoul two years ago.

Team mate Biondi, who had second thoughts after announcing his retirement from swimming at the end of the Seoul Olympics, returns to lead the U.S. men's challenge.

Biondi, Olympic champion at 50 and 100 metres freestyle and silver medalist over 100 metres butterfly, aims to reassess his authority in all three events and will be favourite to retain his world 100 freestyle crown.

The 50 freestyle promises a particularly potent clash, with Rudolph and American defending world champion Tom Jager racing Biondi in the chase for gold.

At the other end of the distance scale, Australian Glen Hansman should attack Vladimir Salnikov's seven-year-old 1,500 metres world record, having been denied it a year ago by a technical timing hitch.

Britain's Adrian Moorhouse — Olympic, European and Commonwealth champion — aims for the one major title missing from his collection after the 1986 world 100 metres breaststroke gold was snatched from his grasp by disqualification for faulty kick at the turn.

The first three days of the championships feature diving, synchronised swimming and water polo but the pace quickens with the innovation of a "sprint day" to open the swimming programme in the Perth Superdrome.

It comprises 50-metre sprints in butterfly, backstroke and breaststroke and 4X50 freestyle relays for both men and women, but is not an official part of the World Championships.

For devotees of long-distance racing, a rest day in the swimming programme offers a 25-kilometre swim in Perth's Swan River.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR SATURDAY DECEMBER 29, 1990

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation
GENERAL TENDENCIES: Except for taking chances with a certain property or asset this is a good day to think out problems in a logical and intelligent manner and to renew within yourself a greater amount of proven principles.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Take care you think big in some financial matters so you can increase your abundance but later some time to enjoy yourself with close friends.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You now can attend to any obligations and have a good brush what is best in your dealings with others early after which you can be with friends.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) A partner is easily willing to come to a new agreement with you that can make your joint undertakings much easier to handle, then be careful later.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Whatever private worries bother you can be settled early in the day by concentrating on them then you can get off to visits with friends.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Open up that desire that means so much to you to a very good friend and you will find that he responds and aids you to get what means the most to you.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) This is the time for you to really plan future fun in spare moments this morning after which you can make plans to please your mate.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) There is a pretty clear person who has it in his or her power to advance you to a new importance by a very basic attitude on your part now.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Whatever you can do to bring a lighter response from usual con-

tacts is good for they are upset and want your approval instead of critical ideas.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Take care you think big in some financial matters so you can increase your abundance but later some time to enjoy yourself with close friends.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) This is the time for you to do pretty much whatever you wish for you have the power of the planets with you but its best you please your family.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Whatever private worries bother you can be settled early in the day by concentrating on them then you can get off to visits with friends.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Open up that desire that means so much to you to a very good friend and you will find that he responds and aids you to get what means the most to you.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) This is the time for you to really plan future fun in spare moments this morning after which you can make plans to please your mate.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) There is a pretty clear person who has it in his or her power to advance you to a new importance by a very basic attitude on your part now.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 21) Whatever you can do to bring a lighter response from usual con-

THE BETTER HALF

By Harris

HARRIS 12-3

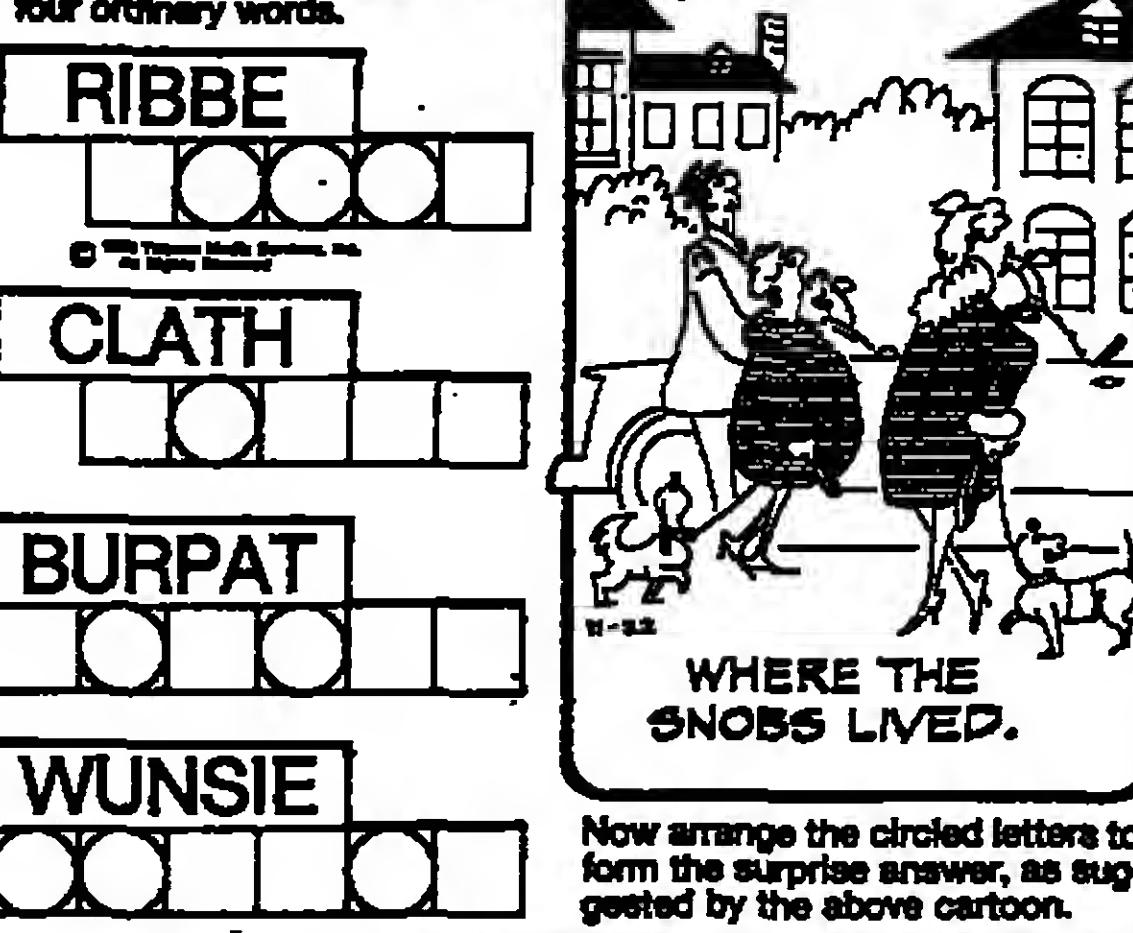


"Do you really think you'll be a better kisser if you put your lips in curlers overnight?"

JUMBLE

THAT SCRABBLE WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: IN

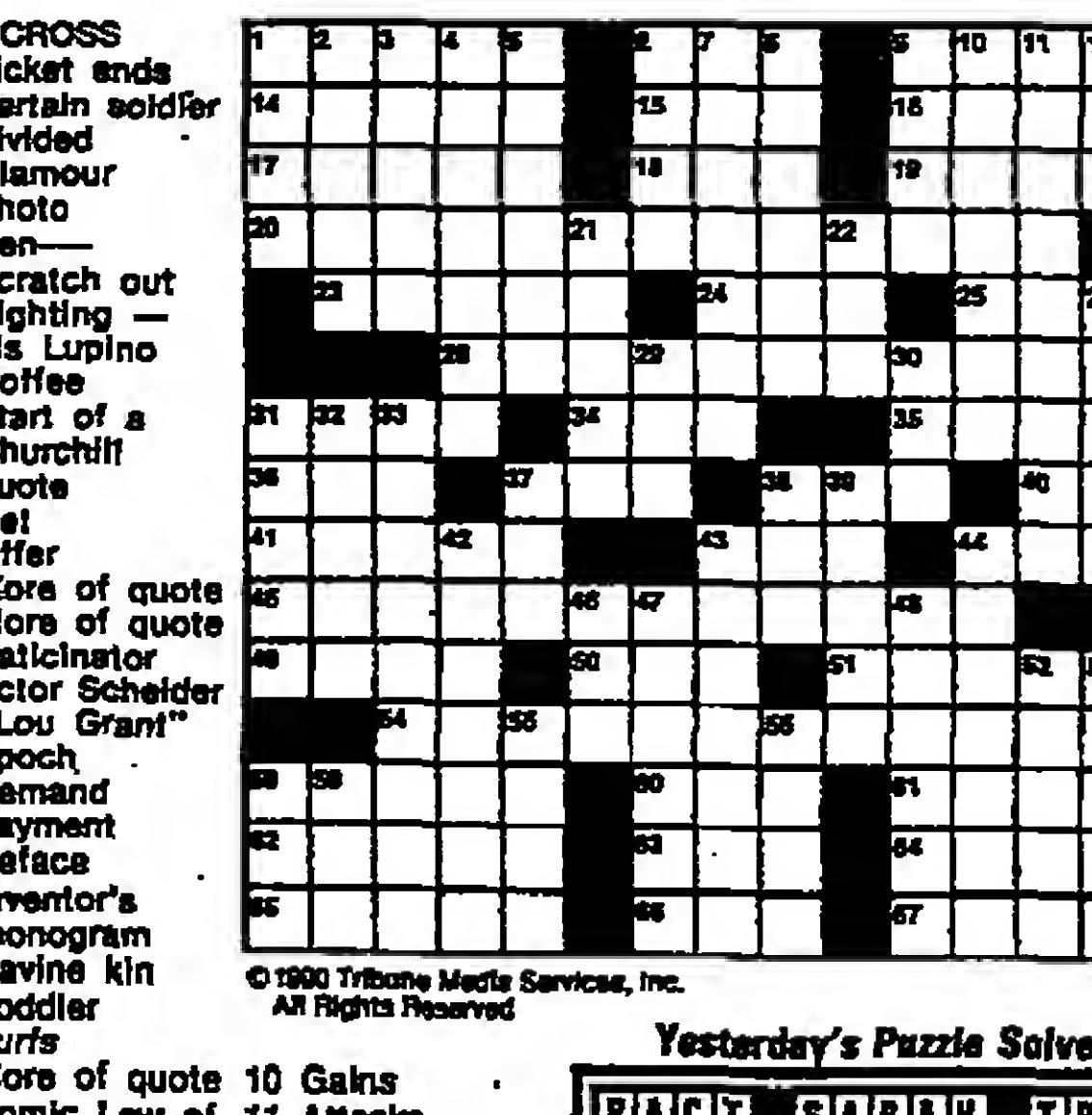
(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumble: HEAVY JUICE WEASEL SWIVEL

Answer: What there was in the courthouse—MORE "JAN" THAN LAW

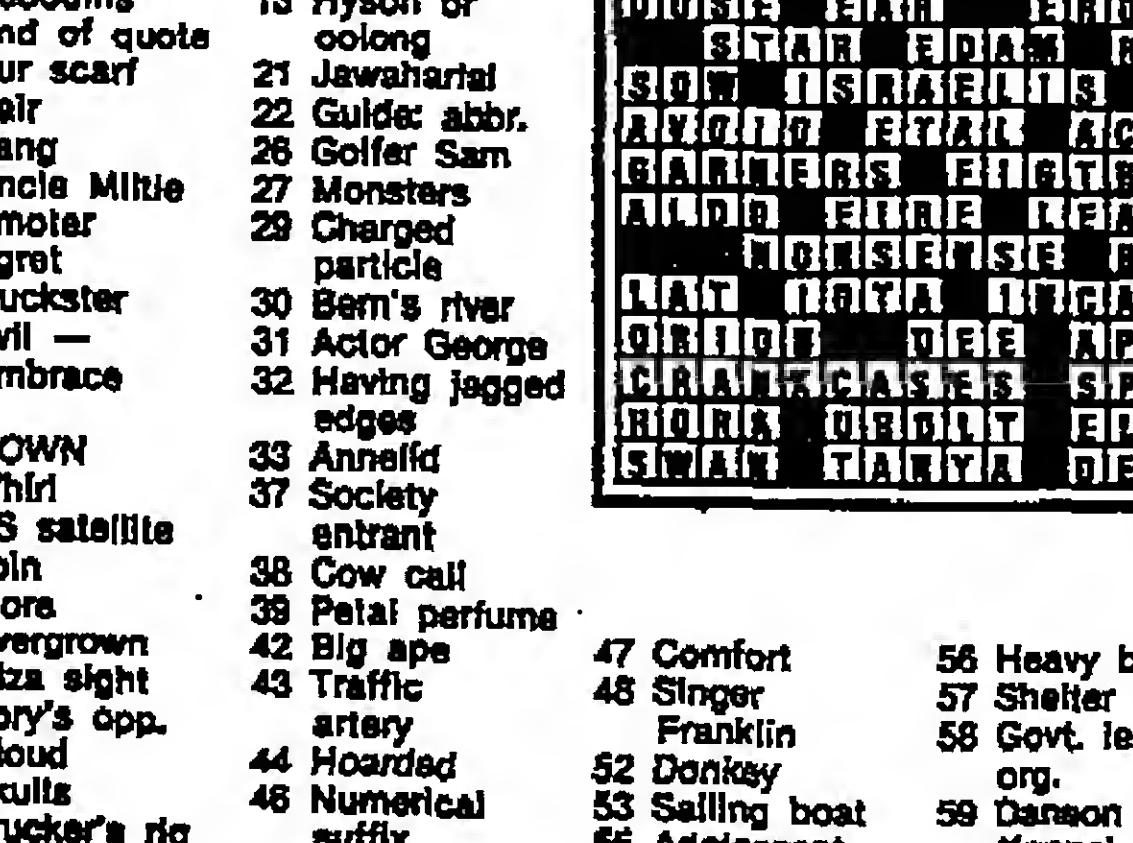
THE Daily Crossword

by Henry Selzinger



© 1990 Tribune Media Services, Inc. All Rights Reserved

Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:



Mutt 'n Jeff



GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNAH HIRSCH

© 1990 Tribune Media Services, Inc.

SAVE PARTNER'S ENTRY

North-South vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH

♦ K 8 4

7 K 6 2

5 7 3

♦ A K 7 5

WEST

♦ A 7 3

9 Q 6 5

7 8 5

♦ J 9 8 4

10 5 2

♦ Q 10 8 3

* 9 4

EAST

♦ 10 9 2

7 A 10 4

5 A K Q 6

* J 6 2

South

Pass

1 ♠

Pass

World News

Shekhar, Sikh leader to discuss Punjab India moves soldiers into Kashmir capital

SRINAGAR (R) — Several hundred Indian soldiers were sent into the streets of Srinagar Friday and a curfew was imposed to halt demonstrations called by Kashmiri militants fighting to be rid of Indian rule.

Officials said similar round-the-clock curfews were imposed on most other towns in the Kashmir Valley, the centre of a year-old rebellion against India.

The streets of Srinagar, summer capital of India's only Muslim-majority state, were deserted and police reported little trouble, saying heavy morning rain helped the security forces.

They reported only one death, that of a young suspected militant shot while fleeing house-to-house searches by soldiers and paramilitary police. Police said an AK-47 assault rifle was found near his body.

The curfew was imposed Friday morning after two outlawed militant groups called on people to take to the streets in protest against what they alleged was torture of prisoners by security forces.

Allegations of torture and arbitrary killings of suspects later reported as deaths during encounters with militants are rife in the Kashmir Valley.

The valley's hereditary chief priest, Mirwaz Omar Farooq,

telephoned a statement of protest to Srinagar reporters condemning the curfew, which prevented Muslims praying on the issue, Singh said.

About 2,000 people have been killed in the uprising this year in a campaign that has virtually halted the economy of the valley, which is largely dependent on tourism.

Meanwhile, Chandra Shekhar, India's prime minister for just seven weeks, scheduled talks with powerful Sikh leader Simranjit Singh Mann Friday in hopes of finding a way to end a decade-old separatist campaign in Punjab.

The talks, the first between an Indian leader and a single Sikh representative in more than five years, were set for Friday evening, Mann spokesman Maninder Singh told Reuters.

He said Mann had finally received a letter from Shekhar inviting him for talks. Mann had refused to meet the Indian leader without an official invitation.

Singh said Mann's mandate from fellow Sikh leaders was "self-determination" for the Sikhs, who are a majority in the rich agricultural northern state where militants are waging a campaign for an independent homeland they call Khalistan (land of the pure).

The talks were made possible by a meeting of all factions of the Sikh Akali Dal Party Wednesday.

Self-determination could mean either independence or greater autonomy and Mann wanted a referendum in Punjab on the issue, Singh said.

Both sides were uncertain about what might come out of the talks. "We're all guessing," said Singh. Official spokesmen had no comment.

There was little optimism in the press.

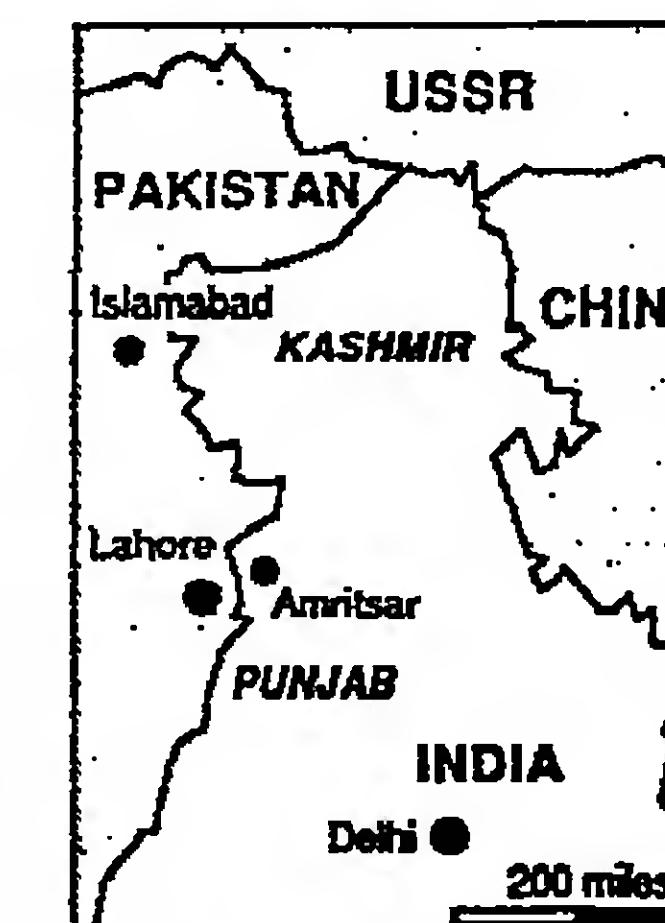
"There have been so many false starts during efforts to solve the Punjab problem that few people will entertain any high hopes about the proposed talks," The Statesman said in an editorial.

Mann, a former senior policeman, and Shekhar are to meet at the end of one of the bloodiest years in Punjab, where police have reported more than 3,800 deaths in the militant campaign, more than double the official toll for last year.

The only serious note of optimism came from The Tribune newspaper, based in the Punjab capital Chandigarh.

"That such a meeting is taking place at all is a phenomenal achievement indicating a qualitative improvement in the situation," it said in an editorial.

The talks were made possible by a meeting of all factions of the Sikh Akali Dal Party Wednesday.



China removes minister of police

PEKING (R) — Chinese Premier Li Peng removed his minister of public security Friday and diplomats said his departure seemed linked with the failure of police to control student protests and catch political fugitives last year.

Wang Fang, 70, had also failed to stop a rising wave of crime which has led to thousands of executions.

The official New China News Agency said Wang was replaced by 35-year-old Tao Siju, a vice minister of public security who joined the Communist Party at the age of 14.

Wang submitted his resignation and Premier Li proposed the changes to the standing committee of China's parliament which approved them, the agency said. It gave no reasons.

Diplomats said Wang had effectively been out of office since last March because of ill health and political reasons.

The main cause of his dismissal seemed to be the inability of his forces to stop waves of students marching from their campuses to Tiananmen Square in April of last year.

"He did not cover himself with glory. In the interests of stability they waited a while before dismissing him," a Western diplomat said.

But, diplomats added, it was the obvious split in the party leadership which allowed the protests to gather momentum.

Even after the army crushed the demonstrations in June, 1989, prominent dissidents and student leaders such as Chai Ling and Wu'erkaixi evaded security forces and fled the country to form opposition groups in exile. "This was severely embarrassing," another diplomat said.

Wang's dismissal follows the sacking last February of the four top leaders of the powerful People's Armed Police, a separate force from the Public Security Ministry.

Wang, who took office in 1987, was generally regarded as a hardliner. But he also had close ties to Zhao Ziyang, the reformist party leader who was removed after the 1989 crackdown.

Under Wang's tenure, China witnessed a soaring crime rate.

What officials described as a "serious smashing campaign launched this year resulted in the executions of hundreds, possibly thousands of people."

The human rights organisation Amnesty International said in September that the 1,100 people it knew had been sentenced to death over the previous 12 months were the "tip of the iceberg."

Wang's predecessor, Ruan Chongguan, was dismissed after an earlier wave of student pro-democracy protests.

The New China News Agency reported that 66-year-old Zheng Toubin was replaced as foreign trade minister after five years in office by Li Lanqing, 58, formerly his vice minister and a Russian and English speaker.

The meeting followed reports that BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia and her main rival for power, Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina, had made scathing references to each other at recent election rallies.

"We must maintain unity and understanding for peaceful holding of the election with a spirit that bound us together in forcing former President Hossain Mohammad Ershad from nearly nine years of autocratic power," one leader told reporters.

Ershad, a former general who seized power in a 1982 military

Kaifu to reshuffle cabinet today

TOKYO (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu agreed with ruling party leaders that he will reshuffle his cabinet Saturday in an apparent move to strengthen his standing.

"We have solved many pending issues, so we agreed to do this (reshuffle)," Ichiro Ozawa, secretary-general of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), told a news conference after meeting Kaifu.

The issues Ozawa referred to were the government budget, to be formally announced Saturday, and the adoption of a party platform to reform Japan's uniquely electoral system.

Parliamentary sources said the reshuffle did not signal any major changes in Kaifu's domestic or foreign policy, although he may appoint a new foreign minister.

Finance Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto is expected to be retained because he has responsibility for next year's budget.

Government legislation for the expected 70.35 trillion yen (\$32 billion) budget for the year starting in April will be submitted to parliament in January.

Kaifu is likely to move Justice Minister Seiichi Kajiyama, who came under attack both at home and abroad for racial remarks.

Kajiyama, during a recent tour of Tokyo's seedy Shinjuku district, said blacks and prostitutes destroyed good neighbourhoods.

Kaifu has been reluctant to replace members of his cabinet, saying he faced major foreign and domestic issues.

But LDP bosses, eager to give posts to their subordinates, had been pressing for a reshuffle before the end of the year, the parliamentary sources said.

The prime minister's popularity has fallen from midsummer highs, partly because of an inability to push through policy proposals on the Gulf crisis.

Kaifu's poll rating now stands at about 45 per cent, down from about 65 per cent in July.

Without strong public support Kaifu, who rose to power from a tiny faction within the LDP, lacks the power to manoeuvre against party bosses such as former Premier Noboru Takeshita and former Finance Minister Michio Watanabe.

IRA ends Christmas truce; leader urges peace steps

DUBLIN (R) — As the IRA ended a Christmas truce, the leader of its political wing called on Britain and Ireland to take the next step towards peace in Northern Ireland.

Just 20 minutes after a short-lived ceasefire expired Thursday, the Irish Republican Army (IRA) resumed its guerrilla campaign with a gun attack on British soldiers at a border checkpoint. Nobody was hurt.

Then two policemen were slightly injured by a bomb thrown at a Belfast police station.

Irish Prime Minister Charles Haughey and Britain's Northern Ireland Minister Peter Brooke had both warmly welcomed the IRA's three-day truce, the first it had declared publicly since 1974, as a possible glimmer of hope for the future.

19 killed in continued Sri Lankan fighting

COLOMBO (AP) — Tamil Tigers rebels ambushed soldiers clearing land mines Friday in eastern Sri Lanka, killing at least 10 people, military officials said.

The dead included five soldiers, one policeman and four Sinhalese civilians, said the officials who cannot be identified under briefing rules.

The ambush took place at 7:30 a.m. (0200 GMT) in Baktiyawa village when the soldiers were busy with the daily task of checking roads for land mines and booby traps, the officials said.

Details of the attack were not immediately available from the remote village in Ampara district, 200 kilometres east of Colombo.

Three militants were killed in two separate incidents in the north and the east, the officials said without giving details.

They said three more guerrillas were killed in Elephant Pass near a military camp that has been under attack since Sunday.

Bangladesh politicians agree not to trade abuse

DHAKA (R) — Bangladesh's normally vociferous politicians have agreed not to trade abuse in the run up to Feb. 27 parliamentary elections.

"The decision to refrain from making provocative remarks so that the elections can be held peacefully was reached at a meeting of three political alliances," a senior political leader said Friday.

Wang, who took office in 1987, was generally regarded as a hardliner. But he also had close ties to Zhao Ziyang, the reformist party leader who was removed after the 1989 crackdown.

Under Wang's tenure, China witnessed a soaring crime rate.

What officials described as a "serious smashing campaign launched this year resulted in the executions of hundreds, possibly thousands of people."

The human rights organisation Amnesty International said in September that the 1,100 people it knew had been sentenced to death over the previous 12 months were the "tip of the iceberg."

Wang's predecessor, Ruan Chongguan, was dismissed after an earlier wave of student pro-democracy protests.

The New China News Agency reported that 66-year-old Zheng Toubin was replaced as foreign trade minister after five years in office by Li Lanqing, 58, formerly his vice minister and a Russian and English speaker.

The meeting followed reports that BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia and her main rival for power, Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina, had made scathing references to each other at recent election rallies.

"We must maintain unity and understanding for peaceful holding of the election with a spirit that bound us together in forcing former President Hossain Mohammad Ershad from nearly nine years of autocratic power," one leader told reporters.

Ershad, a former general who seized power in a 1982 military

coup, resigned and handed over power to Acting President Sharabuddin Ahmad on Dec. 6 after a violent campaign by opposition parties, students and others.

Ershad, now in detention in a private villa, was formally charged Thursday with abuse of power and corruption.

Ahmad, a former chief justice, said after taking office that his main job was to hold free and impartial elections to restore democracy in this South Asian country of 110 million of the world's poorest people.

He said the meeting Thursday night, headed by Mir Shawkat Ali, Dhaka branch leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), urged political workers to remain respectful to democratic behaviours and avoid pasting posters of one party on that of another.

The meeting followed reports that BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia and her main rival for power, Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina, had made scathing references to each other at recent election rallies.

"We must maintain unity and understanding for peaceful holding of the election with a spirit that bound us together in forcing former President Hossain Mohammad Ershad from nearly nine years of autocratic power," one leader told reporters.

Ershad, a former general who seized power in a 1982 military

coup, resigned and handed over power to Acting President Sharabuddin Ahmad on Dec. 6 after a violent campaign by opposition parties, students and others.

Ershad, now in detention in a private villa, was formally charged Thursday with abuse of power and corruption.

Ahmad, a former chief justice, said after taking office that his main job was to hold free and impartial elections to restore democracy in this South Asian country of 110 million of the world's poorest people.

He said the meeting Thursday night, headed by Mir Shawkat Ali, Dhaka branch leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), urged political workers to remain respectful to democratic behaviours and avoid pasting posters of one party on that of another.

The meeting followed reports that BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia and her main rival for power, Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina, had made scathing references to each other at recent election rallies.

"We must maintain unity and understanding for peaceful holding of the election with a spirit that bound us together in forcing former President Hossain Mohammad Ershad from nearly nine years of autocratic power," one leader told reporters.

Ershad, a former general who seized power in a 1982 military

coup, resigned and handed over power to Acting President Sharabuddin Ahmad on Dec. 6 after a violent campaign by opposition parties, students and others.

Ershad, now in detention in a private villa, was formally charged Thursday with abuse of power and corruption.

Ahmad, a former chief justice, said after taking office that his main job was to hold free and impartial elections to restore democracy in this South Asian country of 110 million of the world's poorest people.

He said the meeting Thursday night, headed by Mir Shawkat Ali, Dhaka branch leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), urged political workers to remain respectful to democratic behaviours and avoid pasting posters of one party on that of another.

The meeting followed reports that BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia and her main rival for power, Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina, had made scathing references to each other at recent election rallies.

"We must maintain unity and understanding for peaceful holding of the election with a spirit that bound us together in forcing former President Hossain Mohammad Ershad from nearly nine years of autocratic power," one leader told reporters.

Ershad, a former general who seized power in a 1982 military

coup, resigned and handed over power to Acting President Sharabuddin Ahmad on Dec. 6 after a violent campaign by opposition parties, students and others.

Ershad, now in detention in a private villa, was formally charged Thursday with abuse of power and corruption.

Ahmad, a former chief justice, said after taking office that his main job was to hold free and impartial elections to restore democracy in this South Asian country of 110 million of the world's poorest people.

He said the meeting Thursday night, headed by Mir Shawkat Ali, Dhaka branch leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), urged political workers to remain respectful to democratic behaviours and avoid pasting posters of one party on that of another.

The meeting followed reports that BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia and her main rival for power, Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina, had made scathing references to each other at recent election rallies.

"We must maintain unity and understanding for peaceful holding of the election with a spirit that bound us together in forcing former President Hossain Mohammad Ershad from nearly nine years of autocratic power," one leader told reporters.

Ershad, a former general who seized power in a 1982 military

coup, resigned and handed over power to Acting President Sharabuddin Ahmad on Dec. 6 after a violent campaign by opposition parties, students and others.

Ershad, now in detention in a private villa, was formally charged Thursday with abuse of power and corruption.

Ahmad, a former chief justice, said after taking office that his main job was to hold free and impartial elections to restore democracy in this South Asian country of 110 million of the world's poorest people.

He said the meeting Thursday night, headed by Mir Shawkat Ali, Dhaka branch leader of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), urged political workers to remain respectful to democratic behaviours and avoid pasting posters of one party on that of another.

The meeting followed reports that BNP chief Begum Khaleda Zia and her main rival for power, Awami League leader Sheikh Hasina, had made scathing references to each other at recent election rallies.

"We must maintain unity and understanding for peaceful holding of the election with a spirit that bound us together in forcing former President Hossain Mohammad Ershad from nearly nine years of autocratic power," one leader told reporters.

Ershad, a former general who seized power in a 1982 military